

# **Section 1**

## **The Conceptual Model**

## *NJ School Counseling Initiative*

### **1.1: NEW DIRECTIONS**

Changing—in a word we can capture the dynamics of our world as we approach the Year 2000. New technological, political, social, and economic developments occur faster than our world has ever experienced. Our families, our communities, our workforce, and our schools face new challenges with constant change and instability as a way of life.

To succeed in the twenty-first century requires new interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to cope with a rapidly evolving world. Our traditional school systems are at a pivotal point. Educational priorities, staff roles, and school organizations must change to ensure responsible and adaptable citizens for the next millennium. School counseling models must also evolve to address the changing needs of students in New Jersey. To promote their educational, personal, social and career potential in a changing society, students will need dynamic, proactive counseling professionals and a radically new vision of school counseling.

#### **New Directions in New Jersey Life: Families in Transition**

*New Jersey is a montage of suburban, exurban and rural settings: different regions within brief travel distance from each other. Crisscrossing the state are Interstates 80, 280, 287, 95, the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike. The state is known for its diversity: northeastern factories and refineries; northwestern mountains; southern farms; an eastern shoreline stretching the length of the state; and a burgeoning corridor across its center.*

*The family as an institution is changing. New Jersey has become a more transient state. New immigrant arrivals and corporate transfers contribute to a growing instability in the educational system and the workforce. Highly mobile families present new challenges. The high divorce rate has contributed to new family structures with single parents, stepparents, two income families, and guardians. This increasing family instability contributes to a society without roots.*

#### **New Directions in Student Life: Multicultural, Multilingual**

*National gateway cities, Newark, Hoboken, Bayonne, and Jersey City in the north, and Trenton and Camden in the south, have become first homes to immigrants and refugees. Bilingual and ESL programs are first classrooms to our new residents, who are transforming our schools and communities with cultural richness and diversity. With this diversity comes the challenge of understanding new languages, ethnic and racial differences, and cultural experiences.*

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### **New Directions in Employment Opportunities: the Changing Workforce**

*The New Jersey economy will continue to shift toward highly skilled jobs in the information, technology, and service sectors. With a slower growth track in the economy, entry level positions will be more difficult to find. Job growth will be faster in the new, higher-skilled occupations. As traditional lower-skilled jobs become obsolete, new technological jobs and skill needs are created overnight.*

*Rapid growth in technology increases the level of skills required in most jobs: clerical workers use word processing and electronic mail systems; mail clerks use high speed sorters; auto mechanics solve problems with computerized diagnostic systems; school counselors utilize computer assisted career programs; architects use computer assisted drafting; and accountants rely on automated payroll systems. As entry level skills continue to rise, career preparation will become more critical.*

### **New Directions in Career Development: Lifelong Education**

*New skills will be required for workers in the twenty-first century. The way work is organized in an information, post-technological society requires an understanding of group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, conflict resolution, and team management. Technology has created instant information exchange and constant obsolescence, therefore making adaptability to rapid change a required skill.*

*Lifelong learning will become part of our way of life. Traditional school and career counseling programs reflected the three-box linear theory of career development, unfolding in three sequential steps: school, work, and retirement. Recent mass layoffs of employees sent shocks across the workforce, making this three-box image an obsolete concept. Workers must now accept the need to engage in lifelong learning and career preparation in order to retain marketable skills. Workers may change careers five times in their working years.*

### **New Directions in Education: Children At-Risk**

*At Risk has become the fourth R in our schools. Divorce, poverty, racism, language barriers, homelessness, and unemployment have, in some areas, become the norm for our children. Their learning is affected by a multitude of personal and societal problems. Integrating primary prevention programs with reading, writing and arithmetic in the early years provides coping skills before the effects of these problems take their toll.*

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### **New Directions in Human Potential: Multiple Intelligence**

*The traditional I.Q. is being challenged by a new theory of human potential and competence. Every child may have at least seven intelligences with multiple interactive potentials: linguistics, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, personal sense of self, and interpersonal intelligence. Standard I.Q. tests may not measure human abilities needed for the twenty-first century—how to solve problems or create new products in the many vocational and avocational competencies needed for our society to thrive.*

### **New Directions in Society: Substance Abuse**

*Perhaps the greatest threat facing our families and children are the problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse. Substance abuse affects the student, the family, the school, the community and our society. Community Alliances, national prevention programs, and school wide alcohol and drug programs have grown quickly to respond to this problem. Awareness, refusal skills, support groups, prevention programs, referral networks, and aftercare are weapons of the twenty-first century against substance abuse.*

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### **NEW DIRECTIONS IN SCHOOL COUNSELING: THE RESPONSE**

*School Counseling has evolved dramatically from its roots in the early 1900's. The profession has been enhanced by the influence of developmental psychology. Elementary guidance curricula, School Counselors, parent involvement, and peer helping programs promote comprehensive School Counseling programs. New School Counseling paradigms in group counseling, multicultural counseling, multimodal counseling, and brief counseling have enriched School Counseling programs.*

#### **Comprehensive Programs**

*The delivery of School Counseling has radically changed from traditional, reactive services to proactive, developmental programming. Comprehensive School Counseling is a planned, sequential, and coordinated program, not an ancillary service. It is central to the education of each student, and is the responsibility of the entire school community. Comprehensive School Counseling programs link activities in a developmental sequence to provide the best programs and utilize counselor expertise in the most efficient way.*

#### **Elementary Counseling**

*A comprehensive program is a continuum of counseling programs, K-12. Elementary School Counseling is the foundation for a comprehensive school counseling program in the twenty-first century. It is also the showcase where the school counselor's professional skills can be most effective. With the rapid growth of Elementary School Counseling, programs in the middle and high schools benefit from the powerful impact of its developmental counseling approach.*

#### **Group Counseling**

*Group work is essential to deliver counseling to all students. Initiated in the elementary schools, counseling groups and structured guidance groups have had a positive domino effect into middle and high school. Developmental groups on self esteem and friendship, support groups for children of divorce, children of alcoholics or recovering students, and parent groups and community networks utilize group methods.*

#### **Peer Facilitation**

*The power of peer helpers is documented at all levels of education, K-12. Peers serve as the most powerful student influence, with positive peer facilitation programs helping the leaders as well as student participants. Cooperative learning and teamwork are more effective than competitive education.*

#### **Parents as Partners**

*Parent involvement is essential to student development—educational, personal, social and career. Major recommendations for educational reform have, as their cornerstone, parent involvement. Parents are essential partners in their children's plans as advisors, tutors, mentors, and resource personnel. The vital role of the family has made family systems approaches essential to school counseling.*

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### **Business & Community Alliances**

*Partnerships reflect the interdependence in the community to help students become productive citizens. School adoptions, community drug alliances, business/school partnerships, mentoring and tutoring programs link school and community.*

### **A Broader Role for School Counselors**

*If School Counseling is to survive as a profession into the twenty-first century, it must continue to evolve and change to meet the dramatically different needs of our students. The traditional, reactive guidance counselor is ill equipped to help prepare our students for the future.*

The New Jersey Model incorporates the role of the School Counselor as a positive change agent in the schools. The Model transforms the way counselors view themselves in the educational process, shifting their role from a school maintenance/administration focus to a student development focus:

- 1) Counselors are totally school counseling-focused. They prevent add-on duties because they follow a clearly defined counselor role description based upon developmental counseling goals for all students.
- 2) Counselors do what they are professionally trained to do. Their activities require master's level training in counselor education. Paraprofessional and clerical tasks are delegated to staff members with the minimum skill level to accomplish the task.
- 3) Counselors are viewed as equal professional partners in the educational process. They are responsible for the counseling program, an essential component of the school program, as important to students as the study of mathematics or English.
- 4) The counselor-student ratio and counselor caseload reflect student counseling priorities. Counselors adjust their schedules to provide adequate time to respond to planned (preventive) and unplanned (crisis) student needs.
- 5) Counselors cooperatively identify student priorities and implement their program as a counseling team. They no longer work solely as isolated individuals in separate offices. They share the assessment, development, implementation, and evaluation functions of the comprehensive guidance program.
- 6) Counselors utilize their professional expertise in group facilitation and group counseling. As active change agents in the school, they facilitate change each day in all school arenas—in staff meetings, parent groups and classrooms.

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- 7) Since the school counseling program is the shared responsibility of the entire staff, school counselors actively solicit broad membership on steering and advisory committees from parents, teachers, students, community members, secretaries, board members, and administrators.
- 8) Counselors actively participate in ongoing professional development in such timely areas as group counseling, substance abuse, multicultural counseling, and suicide prevention. The school counseling program ensures that sufficient time and resources are built into the program.
- 9) Guidance counselors in the nineties move beyond the limitations of their traditional name. The holistic title 'school counselor' emphasizes their central role in the educational process. School counselors integrate personal/social, educational, and career development goals into the new comprehensive developmental counseling vision of the twenty-first century.

School Counselors are change agents, skilled in group dynamics, problem solving, decision making, active listening, family systems, and goal setting. Within a comprehensive School Counseling program that responds to the contemporary student's needs, the School Counselor is on the cutting edge of positive change. The New Jersey Model offers our students a real opportunity to be ready for the future.

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### 1.2 PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the New Jersey School Counseling Initiative (NJSCI) is to provide a model which assists local school districts in the development of *their own* comprehensive School Counseling program.

Comprehensive School Counseling programs in local districts are designed to '...help all students develop their educational, social, career, and personal strengths and to become responsible and productive citizens. School Counselors help create and organize these programs, as well as provide appropriate counselor interventions' (The American School Counselors Association, 1990).

Recognizing that New Jersey is a state with great diversity, this model is composed of components which school districts can utilize to best meet the needs of all their students.

### 1.3 RATIONALE

Comprehensive School Counseling is an integral part of the educational system. It is developmental by design and addresses the education and growth of the whole person to become an effective lifelong learner, responsible citizen and productive and satisfied worker.

Comprehensive School Counseling is a program, not a service. Student needs are the primary focus for program development. The need for school counseling begins in the early years and continues throughout life. All students benefit from counseling relationships and from activities planned to maximize their educational, personal and career development.

The developmental approach is planned, preventative, and proactive. It contrasts with the traditional guidance approach, which addresses the needs of only a few students and is reactive, crisis-oriented, unplanned, and focused upon information, scheduling, records, and noncounseling functions.

The developmental program focuses on activities which help students acquire understanding and skills to successfully pass through developmental stages of life. Sequential planned activities are coordinated by school counselors and implemented by the entire school and community. Counselors, peers, administrators, parents, teachers, and business and community members all promote student development in four ways: counseling, curriculum, consultation and enhancement. The curriculum identifies the competencies to be attained by all students, and presents structured activities to help them achieve competence. Continuous, systematic student planning links the four components into an interactive program to promote and monitor individual student competence.



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### **1.4 ASSUMPTIONS**

The assumptions are the foundation upon which a Comprehensive School Counseling program rests. These assumptions reflect the evolution of School Counseling and developmental guidance, as well as the changing needs of New Jersey's population. Comprehensive School Counseling in New Jersey:

- ▶ *recognizes the need for counseling is a lifelong process*
- ▶ *understands the rapidly changing nature of society and its effects on children's development*
- ▶ *reflects the counseling needs and expectations of the community and its families*
- ▶ *promotes educational excellence through the individual excellence of every student*
- ▶ *meets the unique personal, social, educational and career needs of all students at all educational levels (Pre-K to post-high school)*
- ▶ *identifies student skills essential to success at each developmental stage of learning and growth*
- ▶ *provides developmental, as well as preventive, remedial, and crisis programs*
- ▶ *involves the entire community, including parents, teachers, students, business and industry*
- ▶ *integrates the expertise of counselors, teachers, and others into the total program delivery system*
- ▶ *provides for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of student and program outcomes to meet changing needs of students*
- ▶ *is enhanced by the school counselor as a role model for effective human relations skills and an advocate for individual student development*
- ▶ *provides on-going professional development, and counselor participation in professional associations, to maintain a quality School Counseling program*

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### **1.5 DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**

The New Jersey Model is founded upon developmental theory. As children mature, they pass through predictable developmental stages. During each stage, learning experiences must occur to promote the necessary building blocks for steady progress toward successful adult life. The journey to adulthood can be a direct, non-stop process which passes each developmental milestone at the appropriate point in time. The skills gathered during this process equip students to engage in lifelong learning throughout the adult years. The developmental approach anticipates the students' needs and integrates them into a planned program of learning activities.

A program that is not developmentally based reacts to accidents along the journey, haphazardly gathering developmental building blocks at unidentified mile markers. Reactive and crisis oriented, the traditional guidance program responded to unplanned events, provided band-aids to long-standing problems. This approach requires students to backtrack, take detours, and make repairs in adulthood for those missed opportunities during the journey. Students with this educational experience have an unstable foundation as they continue through their life's journey.

A developmental program has several characteristics:

- ▶ Student growth and development are the priority goals
- ▶ Developmental milestones are targeted for services for *all* students
- ▶ Student competencies reflect emerging emotional, physical and intellectual capabilities at their age or grade
- ▶ Counseling and learning activities flow logically from students' identified developmental needs
- ▶ Activities are appropriate to students' developmental level
- ▶ A developmental curriculum forms a continuum of awareness, understanding, and application of life skills